

## Noteworthy Facts

Did you know?

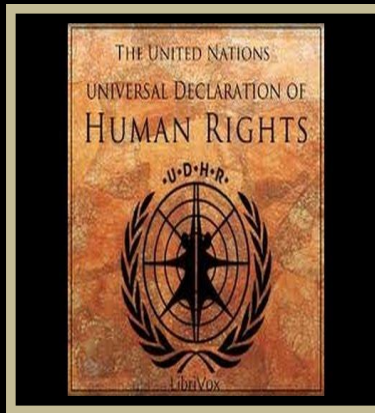
- In 1945, following the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust, a number of governments said “never again”, and drew up the United Nations Charter. A commission “for the promotion of human rights”, chaired by the former US First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, was also established.
- The Commission was created in 1946. It completed its proposed declaration in June 1948. The final draft went to the full General Assembly on 6 December 1948. On 10 December, 48 States voted to adopt it. None voted against, eight abstained.
- Differences in language and values made drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) a marathon of meetings and negotiations. The world’s first major legal system and legal philosophies had to be considered and religions including Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hindu, Islam and Judaism.
- Its adoption marked the first time in history that people from different cultures had worked together to identify a common vision of the specific rights and freedoms of all human beings.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/226427.stm>

# Fact Sheet – December 2015

## Universal Declaration of Human Rights

By the Workplace Diversity Unit



### What is in the Declaration?

It consists of a preamble and 30 articles, setting forth the human rights and fundamental freedoms to which all people, everywhere are entitled.

It identifies civil and political rights such as the right not to be subjected to torture, to equality before the law, to a fair trial, to freedom of movement, to asylum and to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion, and expression. It also includes economic, social and cultural rights such as the right to food, clothing, housing and medical care, to social security, to work, to equal pay for equal work, and to form trade unions and to education.

### What has the declaration achieved?

Over the past 50 years, the Universal Declaration has become a powerful tool in the armory of those trying to dissuade governments from violating human rights. Many lawyers regard it as part of customary international law.

Along with the UN Charter, it has provided the moral and legal basis for United Nations action – including action by the Security Council – against violators of human rights.

Countries have included the language and principles of the UDHR in their national constitutions, and in their statutory laws and regulations. The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental freedoms adopted by the Council of Europe in 1950, and Article II of the Charter of Organization of African Unity are two examples of documents, which draws heavily on the UDHR.

